

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to the entry of this amendment, claims 14-25 were pending in this application. Claims 14, 17, 19, 21 and 24 have been amended. Claims 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23 and 25 have been canceled without prejudice and without disclaimer. No claims have been added. Accordingly, claims 14, 17, 19, 21 and 24 remain pending in this application.

Claims 14-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,868,397 to McCaslin (hereinafter "McCaslin") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,574,380 to Dublin (hereinafter "Dublin"), and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0208365 to Avery et al. (hereinafter "Avery"). The Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness in rejecting these claims. Therefore, the Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the Office Action must establish: 1) some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the references or combine their teachings; 2) a reasonable expectation of success of such a modification or combination; and 3) a teaching or suggestion in the cited prior art of each claimed limitation. MPEP §706.02(j).

As will be discussed below, the references cited by the Office Action do not teach or suggest each claimed limitation. The Office Action does not provide evidence that the suggestion or motivation to modify or combine the references cited is explicit or implicit in the references cited. Further, the Office Action does not provide any evidence that knowledge of one skilled in the art would provide the suggestion or motivation to modify these references. Finally, the Office Action does not provide evidence of a reasonable expectation of success of such a modification or combination.

Embodiments of the present invention relate to the processing of customer "renewal" orders for energy-saving transformers -- that is, orders for the replacement of standard transformers with energy-saving ones. The renewal order process involves multiple steps, including the determination of a date for installing a measuring circuit on a customer's existing

(standard) transformer, and the determination of a date for pre-inspection of the customer's transformer prior to the measuring circuit installation. The measuring circuit allows a transformer seller or manufacturer to determine the customer's current power usage conditions and to recommend an optimal configuration of energy-saving replacement transformers.

As shown in Fig. 2 of the specification, one embodiment of the present invention includes receiving, at a sales department or "dealer," a renewal order 303a from a customer. In response, the sales department provides a first response message (e.g., e-mail message) 304, asking the customer to select a date for installing the measuring circuit. The first response message 304 is also provided (e.g., CC'ed) to a measurement department or "factory." At step 102, the customer sends her desired installation date to the measurement department. In response, the measurement department provides a second response message 401, confirming the installation date. In various embodiments, the second response message 401 may also ask the customer to select a date for a pre-installation inspection (e.g., "previous inspection") of the customer's transformer. At step 103, the customer sends her desired pre-inspection date to the measurement department. In response, the measurement department sends a third response message 402, confirming the pre-inspection date.

In this fashion, embodiments of the present invention facilitate the replacement of a transformer by coordinating communications regarding installation of a measuring circuit (and optionally, pre-installation inspection) among the customer, the transformer sales department, and the transformer measurement department.

Accordingly, pending independent claim 14 recites, in part:

A method for controlling a reply to a received order for a transformer... the method comprising:
upon receipt of access information by the sales department server from the customer terminal relating to replacement of a transformer, sending a first response message including a desired inquiry of a customer relating to an installation date, stored in an email server of the sales department, of a measuring circuit of the transformer and transmitting the first response message to the customer's terminal, wherein a formatted document for the first response has been previously stored in an email server of the sales department;
upon receipt of a reply from the customer terminal in response to the first response message, sending a second response message including the installation date of the measuring circuit of the transformer to the customer terminal, wherein a formatted document for the second response has been previously stored in an email server of the measurement department.
(Emphasis added)

Furthermore, pending independent claim 21 recites, in part:

A method for controlling a reply to a received order for a transformer... the method comprising:
upon receipt of access information relating to replacement of a transformer from the customer terminal by sales department server, calling a first response message which includes an inquiry of a customer relating to an installation date of a measuring circuit of the transformer, whose identification is stored in an email server of the sales department, and transmitting the first response message to the customer terminal, wherein a formatted document for the first response has been previously stored in an email server of the sales department;
upon receipt of a reply from the customer terminal in response to the first response message, calling a second response message including an inquiry of a customer desired date relating to the installation date of the measuring circuit and to previous inspection of the installation of the measuring circuit stored in the measurement department server and transmitting the second response message to the customer terminal; and
upon receipt of a reply from the customer terminal in response to the second response message, generating a third response message including an implementation date of the previous inspection, and transmitting the third response message to the customer terminal, wherein formatted documents for the second and third responses have been previously stored in an email server of the measurement department. (Emphasis added)

The other pending claims recite limitations that are substantially similar to claims 14 and 21.

McCaslin is directed to a generalized data processing system for managing equipment information within an organization (e.g., an electric utility company). The system of McCaslin includes a mechanism for ordering replacement parts, such as transformers, to "replace equipment used from the service centers for recent installations to ensure adequate inventory at service centers at all times." (Col. 2, lines 31-33) To this end, McCaslin provides an "Order Entry GUI," as depicted in Fig. 23, that allows users of the system to specify a "need date" for an ordered part. Thus, as best understood, McCaslin discloses a method for ordering a transformer by specifying a date by which the ordered transformer is needed.

However, McCaslin makes absolutely no reference to the specific concept of "renewing" a standard transformer with an energy-saving one. As such, McCaslin completely fails to teach or suggest "controlling a reply to a received order for a transformer... [by] sending a first response message including a desired inquiry of a customer relating to an installation date... of a measuring circuit of the transformer" as recited in the pending claims.

The combination of McCaslin with Dublin does nothing to provide this missing teaching. The Dublin reference is merely a technical specification for a measuring circuit. There is no teaching or suggestion, in either McCaslin or Dublin, regarding how or why the Dublin measuring circuit would be incorporated within the system of McCaslin. The Office Action asserted that “McCaslin does teach sending information back to the customer about the installation date of the transformer... The Examiner then turns to Dublin to teach the measuring circuit of the transformer.” However, the Office Action provided no indication or citation explaining why a user ordering a transformer in the system of McCaslin would receive information back regarding an installation date of a measuring circuit for a transformer. Perhaps the Office Action construed the combination of McCaslin and Dublin to suggest that a user ordering a measuring circuit would receive information back regarding an installation date of the ordered measuring circuit – in this case, the installation date would correspond to the “need date” of the ordered part as described in McCaslin. However, this is completely different from ordering a transformer and receiving information back regarding an installation date of a measuring circuit of the transformer, as described in the pending claims.

The combination of McCaslin and Dublin with Avery also does nothing to provide this missing teaching. Avery is directed to a web-based system for ordering transformers. However, Avery makes no reference to installing a measuring circuit on a transformer. Thus Avery, either singly or in combination with the other references, fails to teach or suggest “controlling a reply to a received order for a transformer... [by] sending a first response message including a desired inquiry of a customer relating to an installation date... of a measuring circuit of the transformer” as recited in the pending claims.

Furthermore, none of the cited references refer to the concept of a pre-installation inspection, or “previous inspection,” as recited in pending claims 21 and 24.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully asserted that the pending claims are not obvious over the cited prior art references. Maintenance of the obviousness claim rejections is improper, and these rejections should be withdrawn.

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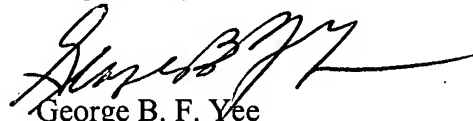
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,


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